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Services, U.S. Senate and Committee on
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Representatives

July 2007

MILITARY PERSONNEL

DOD Lacks Reliable Personnel Tempo Data and Needs Quality Controls to Improve Data Accuracy



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Why GAO Did This Study

Congress has repeatedly expressed concerns about the pace of military operations and 10 U.S.C. §487 requires that the Department of Defense (DOD) annually report on personnel tempo—the time servicemembers spend away from home. Section 345 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 directed GAO to report on a number of Army and Marine Corps issues. For this report GAO addresses the extent to which (1) changes in mobilization and deployment policies have affected reserve component availability and provided an approach to meet the requirements for the global war on terrorism; and, (2) DOD, the Army, and the Marine Corps have collected, maintained, and reported complete and accurate personnel tempo data. To address these objectives, GAO analyzed data from DOD's Personnel Tempo and Contingency Tracking System databases, and interviewed agency officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Army and Marine Corps to develop quality control procedures for validating the accuracy of service member personnel tempo data. In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with the recommendation.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-780.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Sharon Pickup at (202) 512-9619 or pickups@gao.gov.

MILITARY PERSONNEL

DOD Lacks Reliable Personnel Tempo Data and Needs Quality Controls to Improve Data Accuracy

What GAO Found

On January 19, 2007, the Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum which changed mobilization and deployment policies and increased reserve component availability, making virtually all reserve component personnel available on an indefinitely recurrent basis under a long-term approach for meeting the requirements for the global war on terror. Previously, involuntary reserve component mobilizations for the global war on terrorism were limited to 24 cumulative months; there is no cumulative time limit on involuntary mobilizations under the new policy. DOD's new policies provide for an integrated approach to manage the long-term requirements for the global war on terrorism while addressing issues that had previously been addressed in a piecemeal fashion. The new policies emphasize the importance of deployment predictability and unit cohesion and they contain deployment rotation goals, which differ between the active and reserve components. In taking this long-term approach, DOD has recognized that it will not be able to immediately achieve its rotation goals and some units will be remobilized sooner than the standard. Therefore, the Secretary also directed that a program be established to compensate servicemembers who are required to mobilize or deploy early or often or extend beyond the established rotation policy goals.

DOD has reported personnel tempo data to Congress and the President since 2001, but the reports have not been complete and accurate because the Army and Marine Corps do not have quality controls in place to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the reports' underlying data. In October 2001, DOD waived two statutory personnel tempo requirements due to national security interests. As permitted by the statutes, DOD waived the high-deployment payment provision and the management of servicemember deployments which approach or exceeded certain thresholds. With the provisions waived, two mechanisms that would identify faulty personnel tempo data were no longer in place, and the services lacked any other quality control procedures to ensure the accuracy of the data they were collecting and sending to DOD. Despite DOD guidance requiring complete and accurate personnel tempo data, service reviews have found that the collection and tracking of tempo data have not been accurate. In 2005, the Army Human Resources Command reported that personnel tempo was not properly recorded for 72 percent of forward-deployed soldiers. In fiscal years 2005 and 2006, Marine Corps inspection teams found that inspected commands did not have procedures in place to ensure that personnel tempo information was accurately reported. DOD's focus on collecting deployment data for ongoing operations has shifted its attention away from personnel tempo reporting and DOD recently sent a proposal to Congress to modify the definition of deployments. If approved, the new definition would be used to revise personnel tempo thresholds and related compensation. Until DOD establishes quality control procedures, Congress and users of DOD's personnel tempo data need to use caution because they cannot be assured that the data fully and accurately reflect servicemembers' actual tempos.

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

July 17, 2007

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Congress has repeatedly expressed concerns about the pace of military operations; and since 2001, approximately 931,000 U.S. Army and Marine Corps servicemembers have deployed for military operations abroad in support of the Global War on Terrorism, including approximately 312,000 Guard and Reserve members. Prior to the Global War on Terrorism, concerns about the negative effects on individual servicemembers or service readiness led Congress to place statutory limits on the numbers of reserve component personnel who could be involuntarily called to active duty under various mobilization authorities, as well as time limits on involuntary activations. Recently, in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (FY 2000 NDAA), Congress enacted several provisions addressing personnel tempo.¹ Title 37 of the U.S. Code was amended with the addition of a section requiring the secretaries of the military services to pay high-deployment compensation payments to servicemembers for lengthy or numerous deployments in excess of set limits.² A section was added to Title 10 of the U.S. Code requiring

¹Pub. L. No. 106-65, §923 (1999) defined personnel tempo as “the amount of time members of the armed forces are engaged in their official duties, at a location or under circumstances that make it infeasible for a member to spend off-duty time in the housing in which the member resides when on garrison duty at the member’s permanent duty station.” This is codified at 10 U.S.C. §487.

²Pub. L. No. 106-65, §586 (1999), codified at 37 U.S.C. §436 with subsequent amendments.

management of deployments of servicemembers in danger of exceeding high-deployment days thresholds.³ Sections were added to Title 10 of the U.S. Code requiring the Secretary of Defense to include personnel tempo information in his annual report to the President and Congress⁴ and making the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OSD P&R) responsible for monitoring personnel tempo and establishing related standards and policies, subject to the authority, direction and control of the Secretary of Defense.⁵

The provisions requiring high-deployment compensation payments and management of servicemember deployments allow the waiver of those sections if necessary for the national security interests of the United States. In October 2001, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum that waived those two provisions due to the national emergency declared by the President following the September 11th attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. The memorandum stated that the requirements for tracking and reporting of personnel tempo information would not be waived, and explained that past operations have shown the value of collecting this type of data to develop after-action reports, reply to queries, or accomplish analyses relating to the scope of operations.

Since then, the Department of Defense (DOD) has issued a variety of policies that directly and indirectly affect personnel tempo and on January 19, 2007, the Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum that contained revised policies for managing the total active and reserve component force. DOD has also proposed that Congress approve a change to the definition of deployment, which would impact the days of service that could be counted for purposes of calculating personnel tempo, and has

³ Pub. L. No. 106-65, §586 (1999), codified at 10 U.S.C. §991 with subsequent amendments. Initially, this section required general or flag officer management of members who had been deployed 182 days or more out of the preceding 365 days, to ensure that they were not deployed for more than 220 days out of the preceding 365 without special approval. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 amended this section to require management of servicemembers to ensure that they were not deployed for more than 220 days out of the preceding 365 or more than 400 days out of the preceding 730 days without approval of the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary could delegate his approval authority to certain civilian officers and to a general or flag officer in that member's chain of command.

⁴ Pub. L. No. 106-65, §923 (1999), codified at 10 U.S.C. §487 with subsequent amendments.

⁵ Pub. L. No. 106-65, §923 (1999), codified at 10 U.S.C. §136.

said that if the definitional change is approved it will work with the military departments to develop high-deployment thresholds and compensation proposals that are more closely tailored to the individual services' deployment cycles rather than having a single set of thresholds for all services.

In the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007,⁶ Congress required that the Comptroller General issue one or more reports assessing the readiness of Army and Marine Corps ground forces due to the significant deployments under current operational commitments and other demands. Specifically, the act required that the Comptroller General's reports include analyses of Army and Marine Corps reported readiness trends, the ability of the Army and Marine Corps to provide trained and ready forces for ongoing operations and other commitments, the availability of equipment for training, current and projected requirements for equipment repair and replacement and the effects on training, personnel tempos including trends and retention data for enlisted occupations with unusually high or low deployment rates, efforts to mitigate the impact of high operational tempo, and the effect of current mobilization policies on reserve component force availability. This report assesses (1) the extent to which changes in mobilization and deployment policies have affected reserve component availability and provided an approach to meet the requirements for the global war on terrorism, and (2) the extent to which DOD, the Army, and the Marine Corps have collected, maintained, and reported complete and accurate personnel tempo data. We are also providing information on trends in personnel tempo (see app. I), and retention/attrition rates for Army and Marine Corps personnel in enlisted occupational specialties that are experiencing unusually high or low deployment rates (see app. II). We are not drawing any conclusions concerning relationships between deployment and retention because deployment rates are not the only factor that can affect retention or attrition. Appendix II identifies some of the other factors that influence servicemember retention decisions, or attrition. We are reporting separately on the other readiness reporting requirements included in the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007.

To assess the extent to which changes in mobilization and deployment policies have affected reserve component availability and provided an

⁶Pub. L. No. 109-364, §345 (2006).

approach to meet the requirements for the global war on terrorism, we reviewed and analyzed past and present DOD mobilization and deployment policies as well as requirements for the global war on terrorism, comparing the effects of policies before and after Secretary Gates' January 19, 2007, memorandum regarding the utilization of the total force. We also interviewed officials who are responsible for the implementation of personnel policies. To assess the extent to which DOD, the Army, and the Marine Corps have collected, maintained, and reported complete and accurate personnel tempo data, we interviewed and obtained data from Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Army, Marine Corps, and Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) officials who collect and track personnel tempo and deployment data. To provide the data in the appendices on trends in personnel tempo and retention rates for Army and Marine Corps personnel in enlisted occupational specialties that are experiencing unusually high or low deployment rates, we analyzed data from three DMDC data systems—the PERSTEMPO, Contingency Tracking System (CTS), and end strength data systems (Active Duty Military Personnel Master File and the Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System). For the personnel tempo analyses, we used PERSTEMPO and end strength data to identify the yearly end strength population, the population of deployed personnel, and cumulative days deployed. Additionally, we reviewed inspection reports related to personnel tempo and DOD's Annual Reports to Congress and the President. To determine retention rates for Army and Marine Corps personnel in enlisted occupational specialties that are experiencing unusually high or low deployment rates, we used the CTS and end strength data to determine the enlisted occupational specialties that had unusually high or low deployment rates. We then obtained retention data on these occupations from DMDC. We assessed the reliability of the three DMDC data systems and determined that the CTS and end strength data we used were reliable for our purposes. We determined the PERSTEMPO data was not producing reliable personnel tempo summaries and trends. Consequently, we did not use PERSTEMPO data to support findings or recommendations, and in order to meet legislative requirements, we report these data only in appendix I, along with the associated data reliability caveats. For more information on our scope and methodology, see appendix III. We conducted this performance audit from June 2006 through May 2007 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Results in Brief

On January 19, 2007, the Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum which changed mobilization and deployment policies and increased

reserve component availability, making virtually all reserve component personnel available on an indefinitely recurrent basis under a long-term approach for meeting the requirements for the global war on terrorism. Prior to this memorandum, servicemember availability was restricted by a DOD policy which limited involuntary mobilizations for the global war on terrorism to 24 cumulative months. The Secretary's memo and the implementing guidance that followed in March 2007 rescinded the 24-cumulative-month limitation and provided the services with much greater access to their reserve component personnel for the long-term requirements of the global war on terrorism. For example, as of August 31, 2006, almost 421,000 reserve component personnel had been activated and had limited availability for future involuntary mobilizations under the 24-cumulative-month policy, but when the policy was rescinded, previously mobilized personnel became available for future involuntary mobilization without any limitations on their cumulative service. As a result of the new policy, involuntary mobilizations, which will generally be limited to 12 months,⁷ can now recur indefinitely. In addition, the new implementing guidance replaces the prior policies that were issued in a piecemeal fashion to address short-term requirements with an integrated set of policies that governs access to active as well as reserve component personnel. The previous policies had emphasized the use of volunteers, but the new policies emphasize the importance of maintaining unit cohesion and deployment predictability. The new policies contain rotation goals which differ between the active and reserve components. While the new policies provide a long-term approach for meeting requirements, both the Secretary's memo and the implementing guidance acknowledge that the services will not be able to immediately achieve the rotation goals, due to global demands. Therefore, the Secretary's memo directed the establishment of a program to compensate or incentivize servicemembers who are required to mobilize or deploy early or often, or to extend beyond the established rotation policy goals.

Since 2001, DOD has reported personnel tempo data in its "Annual Defense Report to the President and the Congress", but the reports have not been complete and accurate because the Army and Marine Corps do not have quality controls to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the reports' underlying data. In October 2001, DOD waived two provisions related to personnel tempo due to national security interests, but the

⁷At service discretion, this period may exclude individual skill training required for deployments and postmobilization leave.

requirement to report personnel tempo data to the President and Congress remained in place. As permitted by 37 U.S.C. §436 and 10 U.S.C. §991, DOD waived the high-deployment compensation requirement and the requirement to manage servicemember deployments which approach or exceeded high-deployment thresholds. When these provisions were waived, two of the mechanisms for identifying faulty personnel tempo data were no longer in place, and the services lacked any other quality control procedures to effectively ensure the accuracy of the data they were collecting and sending to DOD. Despite DOD guidance which requires personnel tempo data to be complete and accurate, several reviews have found that service collection and tracking of personnel tempo data have not been complete or accurate. For example, in 2005 the Army Human Resources Command reported that personnel tempo was not properly recorded for 72 percent of forward-deployed soldiers, and Marine Corps inspection teams found that 43 percent of the 326 active and reserve units they inspected in fiscal years 2005 and 2006 had not consistently or accurately reported personnel. Furthermore, DOD officials expressed a low level of confidence in the data and said that they relied on an alternative set of data to examine tempo trends. Shortly after the September 11, 2001, attacks, DOD shifted its attention away from collecting and maintaining personnel tempo data and began focusing on collecting and maintaining data to track activations and deployments related to ongoing operations.⁸ In addition, DOD recently sent a proposal to Congress requesting a modification to the deployment definition, which if approved would modify personnel tempo calculations and allow DOD to develop revised high-deployment thresholds and compensation programs that are tailored to individual service deployment cycles. However, DOD officials have stated that neither DMDC nor the services have the complete and accurate data needed to effectively implement a personnel tempo compensation program. Without quality control procedures, personnel tempo data could not be used as an accurate basis to determine eligibility for the high-deployment payment program under 37 U.S.C. §436, or for the revised high-deployment compensation program that DOD has recently proposed to Congress. Until the Army and Marine Corps establish quality control procedures for the collection of their personnel tempo data, Congress and other users of DOD's personnel tempo data need to be

⁸However, this data collection for Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom does not include the full range of personnel tempo events that are listed in 10 U.S.C. §487.

cautious when using the data because they cannot be assured that the data fully and accurately reflect servicemembers' actual tempos.

To improve the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the personnel tempo data that DOD reports to Congress and the President, we are recommending that the Secretary of Defense direct the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to provide guidance which directs the Army and Marine Corps to develop quality control procedures for ensuring the accuracy of the personnel tempo data they collect and report, whether under the existing personnel tempo definition or under any revised definitions that Congress may approve. In its comments on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with our recommendation. DOD also provided technical comments, which we have incorporated in the report as appropriate. DOD's comments and our evaluation are reprinted in their entirety in appendix IV of this report.

Background

Reserve Mobilization

Reserve forces may be called to active duty under a number of authorities. Most reserve component members who have been called to active duty for other than normal training since September 11, 2001, have been activated under one of the three legislative authorities⁹ listed in table 1.

⁹10 U.S.C. §12304 was used to support ongoing operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and has not been utilized since 2004.

Table 1: Mobilization Authorities

| Statute | Type of activation | Maximum number of Ready Reserve members who can be activated at once | Maximum length of activation |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 10 U.S.C. §12301 (d) “With members consent” | Voluntary | Unlimited | Unlimited |
| 10 U.S.C. §12302 “Partial Mobilization” | Involuntary | 1,000,000 | 730 days / 24 consecutive months |
| 10 U.S.C. §12304 “Presidential Reserve Call-up” | Involuntary | 200,000 | 365 days / 12 consecutive months |

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Code provisions.

On September 14, 2001, the President declared that a national emergency existed as a result of the attacks of September 11, 2001, and he invoked 10 U.S.C. §12302, the partial mobilization authority. When DOD issued subsequent guidance concerning the partial mobilization authority,¹⁰ it limited mobilization orders to 12 months but allowed the secretaries of the military departments to extend the orders for an additional 12 months or remobilize reserve component members, as long as an individual member’s cumulative service under the partial mobilization authority did not exceed 24 cumulative months. The guidance also allowed the services to keep members on active duty after they had served 24 months under the partial mobilization authority if the member volunteered to stay on active duty under 10 U.S.C. § 12301(d).

In 2004, we reported¹¹ that the 24-cumulative-month approach and other policies developed at the war’s outset had affected the availability of Army and Marine Corps reservists for second involuntary mobilizations.¹² The

¹⁰OSD Personnel and Readiness, “Mobilization / Demobilization Personnel and Pay Policy for Reserve Component Members Ordered to Active Duty in Response to the World Trade Center and Pentagon Attacks” (Sept. 20, 2001); “Addendum to the Mobilization / Demobilization Personnel and Pay Policy for Reserve Component Members Ordered to Active Duty in Response to the World Trade Center and Pentagon Attacks” (July 19, 2002).

¹¹GAO, *Military Personnel: DOD Needs to Address Long-term Reserve Force Availability and Related Mobilization and Demobilization Issues*, [GAO-04-1031](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 15, 2004).

¹²[GAO-04-1031](#).

report concluded that adhering to the 24-cumulative-month policy amid persistently high requirements could result in the services running out of reservists eligible and available for a second involuntary mobilization. Moreover, we stated that DOD's policies, many of which emphasized the use of volunteers, were implemented in piecemeal fashion, responding to the short-term requirements of the services and the needs of reserve component members, and were not developed within an overall strategic framework to meet the department's long-term requirements for the global war on terrorism. We concluded that given the duration of operational commitments to date (2004) and the likelihood for persistently high force-level requirements into the future, the department needed to develop an integrated set of policies to address both the long-term requirements for reserve component forces and individual reserve component members' needs for predictability. After assessing DOD's policies regarding the management and deployment of reserve component service members, the Secretary of Defense enacted changes to reserve mobilization policy with his January 19, 2007, total force policy memorandum.

Personnel Tempo

Personnel tempo is currently defined as the amount of time members of the armed forces are engaged in their official duties, at a location or under circumstances that make it infeasible for a member to spend off-duty time in the housing in which the member resides when on garrison duty at the member's permanent duty station.¹³ Title 10 of the U.S. Code contains a number of provisions related to personnel tempo including a provision which requires the secretary of each military department to establish a system for tracking and recording the number of days that each member of the armed forces under that secretary's jurisdiction is deployed.¹⁴ There is also a provision that requires management of servicemembers' deployments which approach or exceed high-deployment thresholds.¹⁵ In addition, since October 1, 2000, the Secretary of Defense has been required to include personnel tempo information in his annual report to the President and Congress.¹⁶

¹³ 10 U.S.C. §487.

¹⁴ 10 U.S.C. §991.

¹⁵ 10 U.S.C. §991.

¹⁶ 10 U.S.C. §487.

Title 37 of the U.S. Code contains a requirement for DOD to compensate servicemembers who exceed legislatively established deployment thresholds.¹⁷ At the time the provision was created by the FY 2000 NDAA, the services were to pay a per diem allowance of \$100 to members who deployed for more than 250 days out of the previous 365. Later, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (FY 2004 NDAA¹⁸) modified the high-deployment thresholds and pay provisions, replacing the per diem allowance with a monthly allowance of up to \$1,000, payable for any month in which a member is beyond the new high-deployment thresholds¹⁹ by at least 1 day.

In May 2001, OSD P&R issued a military personnel record instruction which updated responsibilities, procedures, and information-reporting requirements including personnel tempo reporting.²⁰ According to the instruction, all services are to submit personnel tempo data to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), which serves as the central repository and archive for automated manpower and personnel information for DOD. The instruction requires that the services report timely, accurate, and complete personnel tempo data. The Army and Marine Corps each issued further implementing guidance based on the OSD instruction.

On October 8, 2001, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum in accordance with waiver provisions found in 10 U.S.C. §991 and 37 U.S.C. §436, suspending the requirement to compensate servicemembers who exceeded the personnel tempo threshold due to the existence of a national emergency declared by the President. Additionally, the memorandum suspended the statutory requirement for management of servicemember deployments which approached or exceeded high-deployment thresholds. The memorandum did not suspend the

¹⁷37 U.S.C. §436.

¹⁸Pub. L. No. 108-136, §541 (2003).

¹⁹Initially, 37 U.S.C. §436 allowed for a \$100 per diem allowance to be paid to servicemembers who had been deployed 251 days or more out of the preceding 365 days. In 2003, this section was amended by the FY 2004 NDAA to allow a monthly allowance of up to \$1,000 for servicemembers who had been deployed for 191 or more consecutive days or 401 or more days out of the preceding 730 days. The act created additional provisions for determining compensations eligibility for members of the reserve components on active duty.

²⁰Department of Defense Instruction 1336.5, *Automated Extract of Active Duty Military Personnel Records* (May 2, 2001).

requirement for services to collect and submit personnel tempo data, and stated that past operations have proven that collection of these data is valuable in developing after action-reports, replying to queries, or accomplishing analyses relating to the scope of operations.

Virtually All Reserve Component Personnel Are Available Under DOD's Revised Policies that Provide a Long-Term Approach to Meet Mobilization Requirements

On January 19, 2007, the Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum that changed mobilization and deployment policies and increased reserve component availability, making virtually all reserve component personnel available on an indefinitely recurrent basis. The memorandum and subsequent implementing guidance also established a long-term approach for meeting the requirements for the global war on terrorism while striving to provide servicemembers with increased predictability. Additionally, DOD recently established a program to compensate servicemembers who are required to mobilize or deploy early or often, or to extend beyond established rotation policy goals.

Virtually All Reserve Component Members Are Available for Deployment Under New Mobilization Policies

The Secretary of Defense's January 19, 2007, total force policy memorandum and the subsequent March 15, 2007, implementation policy guidance made virtually the entire reserve component force available for mobilization and deployment.²¹ Prior to the Secretary's memorandum, servicemember availability was restricted by a DOD policy which limited involuntary mobilizations for the global war on terrorism to 24 cumulative months. Under the prior policy, any servicemember who had been involuntarily mobilized for 24 months was no longer available to the services for involuntary mobilization. According to DOD data, almost 421,000 reserve component personnel were currently activated or had been previously activated as of August 31, 2006. These personnel would not have been available for involuntary mobilizations, or would have had limited availability under the prior policy.²² However, when the Secretary's

²¹ A few minor or temporary restrictions prevented the whole force from being available. For example, personnel are temporarily not available until they complete their initial training and pregnant servicemembers are not permitted to be involuntarily activated, though they may volunteer to be activated under 10 U.S.C. §12301(d).

²² The data showed that more than 160,000 of these personnel were not available for mobilizations of 12 months or more. The remainder had been mobilized but still had between 12 and 23 months of availability before they would have reached the 24-cumulative-month limitation.

memo and the implementing guidance rescinded the 24-cumulative-month limitation all of these personnel became available for involuntary mobilizations. The revised policies provide the services with much greater access to their reserve component personnel for the long-term requirements of the global war on terrorism because they allow for repeat involuntary mobilizations, without limitations on the cumulative time a servicemember is mobilized. The new guidance allows DOD to mobilize reserve component individuals for a period of time—generally no more than 12 months at a time, send them home, and then remobilize them, repeating this cycle indefinitely and providing an essentially unlimited flow of forces, within the 1 million servicemember and 730 consecutive day limitations of the partial mobilization authority.²³

Mobilization Policy Changes Establish a Long-Term Approach for Meeting the Global War on Terrorism Requirements

DOD's current mobilization policies differ from prior policies because the Secretary's memorandum and the corresponding implementation guidance provide DOD with an integrated approach for managing the use of active and reserve component personnel in meeting the long-term requirements of the global war on terrorism. In 2004 GAO reported²⁴ that DOD's mobilization and personnel policies had been implemented in a piecemeal fashion to address short-term requirements and as a result reserve component personnel were uncertain about the likelihood of mobilizations, the length of service commitments, the length of overseas rotations, and the types of missions they would perform.

The Secretary's January 2007 memorandum and the March 2007 implementing guidance helped address the need for predictability while giving the services flexibility to meet long-term requirements. For example, the documents specified that future mobilizations of ground combat, combat support, and combat services support would be managed on a unit basis to allow greater cohesion and deployment predictability. The implementing guidance also indicated that the secretaries of the military departments would determine the best method for filling unit shortfalls. This decentralized decision authority represents a departure from the previous centralized policy guidance that called for using volunteers before involuntarily mobilizing Individual Ready Reserve members or remobilizing previously mobilized Selected Reserve

²³ 10 U.S.C. §12302.

²⁴ [GAO-04-1031](#).

members.²⁵ The current guidance states that options for filling unit shortfalls could include, but would not be limited to, using volunteers including retirees, involuntary call-ups of Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard, or integrating active component members.

Overall, the memorandum and implementation guidance presented a substantial revision to preceding reserve mobilization policies, stating that the services would plan for a protracted war on terrorism by effectively managing their manpower resources. The single set of guidance provided an integrated approach for meeting long-term requirements and addressed the full range of policy issues that had previously been addressed in a piecemeal fashion. For example, the issues addressed in the March 2007 policy guidance included the length of mobilization orders, extensions, early releases from orders, the use of the Individual Ready Reserve, and exemptions from training following deployments.

The new guidance specifies that future involuntary mobilizations will generally be limited to 12 months, with possible service exceptions for individual skill training required for deployment and postmobilization leave, and other exceptions if approved by the Secretary of Defense. The documents also set rotation policy goals for both reserve and active component personnel. These goals can differ between the active and reserve components and among services.²⁶ While these rotation policies provide a long-term approach for meeting requirements, both the Secretary's memo and the implementing guidance acknowledge that the services will not be able to immediately achieve the rotation goals, due to global demands. The Secretary's memo explicitly states that global demands will require some units to be remobilized sooner than the standard. Therefore, the memo directed the establishment of a program to

²⁵The Selected Reserve includes individual mobilization augmentees who train regularly with active component units as well as members who train regularly with National Guard or Reserve units. Individual Ready Reserve members are servicemembers who have completed the active duty or Selected Reserve portions of their military contracts but who have not reached the end of their military service obligation. Although they were previously trained during periods of active duty service they do not participate in regular training.

²⁶The rotation goals in the memorandum and implementing guidance generally called for reserve component personnel to be involuntarily mobilized for no more than 1 year and then demobilized for 5 years, but the guidance allowed the services to implement the 1:5 ratio with tour and demobilization periods of less than 1 and 5 years based on Secretary of Defense-approved force generation models. Marine Corps deployments are typically 7 months rather than 1 year. Under the new policies, active component personnel are to be deployed for 1 year and then at home station for 2 years.

compensate or incentivize servicemembers who are required to mobilize or deploy early or often, or to extend beyond the established rotation policy goals.

On April 18, 2007, DOD announced that administrative absences would be awarded to servicemembers who are required to mobilize or deploy with a frequency that exceeds established rotation policy goals. The absences will be distinct from normal leave accrued by servicemembers. They will be awarded when servicemember deployments exceed mobilization and deployment planning objectives—that is, twice as much time at home as deployed for the active component, and five times as much time at home as mobilized for the reserve component.²⁷ In addition to the administrative absences, some servicemembers could eventually receive monetary compensation for these deployments or mobilizations if they cause the servicemember to exceed certain thresholds under broader personnel tempo definitions.

Since 2001, DOD Has Submitted Personnel Tempo Reports but the Army and Marine Corps Lack Quality Controls to Ensure the Accuracy of Underlying Data

Since 2001, DOD has reported personnel tempos in its “Annual Defense Report to the President and the Congress”, but the reports have not been complete or accurate because the Army and Marine Corps do not have quality controls in place to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the reports’ underlying data. In addition, DOD’s focus on collecting deployment and activation data for ongoing operations has shifted attention away from personnel tempo tracking and reporting.

²⁷ Creditable deployment time will be based on participation in Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), Operation Iraqi Freedom, or time with theater units in nearby areas. The secretaries of the military departments will be able to add other operational commitments discretionally.

Since 2001, DOD Has Reported Personnel Tempo Data to the President and Congress

As directed by 10 U.S.C. §991, the services began collecting personnel tempo data in fiscal year 2000; and since 2001, DOD has published personnel tempo data in an appendix to “The Annual Defense Report to the President and the Congress” as required by 10 U.S.C. §487. The reported data covered fiscal years 2001 through 2005 and the personnel tempo appendixes have generally included the types of figures that are required by the law—service and component end strengths, the populations of deployed personnel, and average personnel tempos (in days) among the deployed populations or the total end strength populations. Other information related to personnel tempos has also been reported on a sporadic basis. For example, in 2001 and 2002, the appendices included the number of days “high demand/low density” units deployed but this information was not included in unclassified versions in later years.

The Army and Marine Corps Lack Quality Controls to Accurately Collect Personnel Tempo Data

With the suspensions of the high-deployment compensation requirement and the requirement for management of servicemember deployments that approach or exceed high-deployment thresholds, no servicemembers have received personnel tempo payments and a key quality control mechanism has been missing for more than 5 years.²⁸ The suspensions have removed two mechanisms that could have identified faulty personnel tempo data and the Army and Marine Corps lack other quality control procedures for effectively ensuring the accuracy of the data they collect and send to DOD. According to various DOD and service officials, quality checks on the data only occur if servicemembers check the accuracy of their own personnel tempo data. Servicemembers have several opportunities to review their personnel tempo records, such as when they transfer between commands or separate from the service, but the likelihood that they will actually do so is low because there is no incentive to do so. A 2005 III Corps Inspector General report found that fewer than 25 percent of the units inspected included personnel tempo reporting and tracking procedures as part of their in- and out-processing procedures. Furthermore, the Inspector General report found that the office responsible for personnel policy did not publish personnel tempo management guidance in a timely manner.

²⁸Because the services were required to begin collecting data under 10 U.S.C. §991 on October 1, 2000, and the initial per diem payment provision, 37 U.S.C. §436, required that servicemembers be deployed for 250 days out of the previous 365 in order to be eligible for per diem payments, the first time servicemembers would have been eligible to receive per diem payments was October 1, 2001. The payment provision was waived 7 days later, on October 8, 2001, and according to DOD officials, no payments were ever issued.

Since the suspension of the high-deployment compensation and deployment management provisions, several reviews have found that the services' collection and tracking of personnel tempo data have not been complete or accurate, even though the requirement to report tempo data to the President and Congress has remained in place. For example, in 2005 the Army Human Resources Command reported that for 72 percent of forward-deployed soldiers, personnel tempo was not properly recorded in the Electronic Military Personnel Office, the Army's online integrated personnel reporting system. In addition, Marine Corps inspection teams recently concluded that inspected commands did not have procedures in place to ensure that personnel tempo information was reported. Of the 326 active and reserve units inspected in fiscal years 2005 and 2006, 43 percent had not consistently or accurately reported personnel tempo in the Marine Corps Total Force System, the service's integrated personnel database.²⁹

DOD Has Focused on Deployment and Activation Data Rather than on Personnel Tempo Data

Shortly after the September 11, 2001, attacks, DOD shifted its focus away from collecting and maintaining personnel tempo data and began focusing on collecting and maintaining data to track activations and deployments related to major operations.³⁰ This data collection for Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom does not include the full range of personnel tempo events that are listed in 10 U.S.C. §487. The increased priority on data related to global war on terrorism deployments diminished the level of effort given to personnel tempo data collection and the quality of the data collected.

The October 2001 memorandum that suspended the high-deployment compensation and deployment management provisions did not suspend the requirement for the services to collect and submit personnel tempo data. It stated that deployment data tracking and reporting remained a priority, as previous operations had proven that such efforts were valuable for developing after-action reports and completing analyses related to the scope of operations.

Subsequent DOD and service guidance reiterated the requirement to continue reporting personnel tempo information for servicemembers

²⁹Marine Corps inspection teams were focused primarily on financial inspections and personnel tempo was only a part of the inspections. The inspections were not comprehensive and covered only a portion of the Marine Corps.

³⁰These data are tracked in DMDC's Contingency Tracking System.

mobilized or deployed in support of the global war on terrorism, and the DOD guidance required that personnel tempo data reporting be timely, accurate, and complete. Despite this guidance, DOD officials expressed a low level of confidence in the quality of the personnel tempo data that have been collected. They told us that they routinely rely on an alternative set of data from DMDC to examine tempo trends and they noted that DMDC can conduct only limited quality control on personnel tempo data, because DMDC is responsible only for compilation and does not have the resources to identify anomalies in data provided by the services. The services are responsible for collecting personnel tempo data and although both the Army and Marine Corps issued implementing guidance based on the OSD instruction, which required timely, accurate, and complete reporting of personnel tempo data, the implementing guidance did not contain quality control procedures to ensure complete and accurate personnel tempo data are collected and transmitted to DMDC.

In February 2007, DOD submitted a proposal to Congress to modify the deployment definition.³¹ The proposal would maintain the basic definition of deployments but would narrow the scope to exclude non-operational temporary duty including absences for conferences and training and participation in training or exercises designated by the secretaries of the military departments. A change in the definition of deployment would impact personnel tempo calculations by changing the days that could be counted for purposes of personnel tempo. If the proposal is approved, DOD will work with the military departments to develop revised high-deployment thresholds and compensation proposals that are more closely tailored to individual service deployment cycles. However, without quality controls on the collection of Army and Marine Corps data, DOD officials have stated that neither DMDC nor the services have the complete and accurate data needed to effectively implement a personnel tempo compensation program.

Conclusions

Since the onset of the global war on terrorism, the Army and Marine Corps have deployed approximately 931,000 of their servicemembers for military operations abroad. Facing limitations on its available reserve component forces, DOD recently instituted an integrated set of policies that provides it with increased access to its reserve component forces as it plans for a

³¹This proposal was part of the legislative package submitted for consideration as part of the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Bill.

long-term global war on terrorism. Although the new policies will better position the services to meet their long-term requirements, current global demands are making it difficult for the services to meet rotation goals in the short term. Faced with these challenges, the management of personnel tempo is critical as DOD strives to retain a quality force for the future. However, the Army and Marine Corps have not maintained complete and accurate personnel tempo data and they do not have quality control procedures in place to ensure the accuracy of their personnel tempo data. Furthermore, the high-deployment compensation and deployment management provisions which could have helped to identify faulty data have been waived for national security reasons since 2001. Without quality control procedures to ensure the completeness and accuracy of personnel tempo data, the data could not be used as an accurate basis to determine eligibility for the current high-deployment compensation programs found in Title 37 of the U.S. Code or for an alternative compensation program based on DOD's recent legislative proposal. Until the Army and Marine Corps establish quality control procedures for the collection of their personnel tempo data, Congress and others need to be cautious when using DOD's personnel tempo data because they cannot be assured that the data fully and accurately reflect servicemembers' actual tempos.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To improve the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the personnel tempo data that DOD reports to Congress and the President, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to provide guidance which directs the Army and Marine Corps to develop quality control procedures for validating the accuracy of the personnel tempo data they collect and report to DMDC, whether under the existing personnel tempo definition or under any revised definitions that Congress may approve.

Agency Comments

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) provided written comments on a draft of this report. The department concurred with the recommendation. The department's comments and our evaluation are reprinted in their entirety in appendix IV. In addition, the department provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to other appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Defense. We will also make copies available to other interested parties upon request. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-9619 or pickups@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon L. Pickup". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sharon L. Pickup
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: Army and Marine Corps Personnel Tempo Trends Based on Available Data

According to the 2005 Annual Defense Report to the President and the Congress, personnel tempos for the Army and the Marine Corps increased significantly between fiscal year 2001 and fiscal year 2003 and then the rates declined slightly in fiscal year 2004. At the time of our report, the Department of Defense (DOD) had not released the 2006 Annual Defense Report to the President and the Congress, which would have contained 2005 personnel tempo data.

DOD has reported two measures of personnel tempo. The first divides the total number of days deployed under the personnel tempo definition by the total end strength of each service or service component. The second also begins with the total number of days deployed under the personnel tempo definition but divides this figure only by the number of personnel who were actually deployed during the fiscal year. Table 2 shows Army and Marine Corps personnel tempo figures as reported in the 2005 Annual Defense Report to the President and the Congress. However, as discussed earlier in this report, we determined that DOD’s personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) data may not produce reliable personnel tempo summaries and trends because the Army and Marine Corps lack quality control procedures for collecting these data and reporting them to Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC).

| Table 2: Army and Marine Corps Personnel Tempos | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Service | Personnel tempo measure | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2001 | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2002 | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2003 | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2004 |
| Army | (by end strength) | 14.9 | 24.9 | 55.7 | 54.8 |
| Marine Corps | (by end strength) | 24.8 | 34.7 | 64.8 | 49.6 |
| Army | (by deployed personnel only) | 34.1 | 60.2 | 124.6 | 119.4 |
| Marine Corps | (by deployed personnel only) | 63.0 | 82.9 | 130.7 | 102.1 |

Source: 2005 Annual Defense Report to the President and the Congress.

We also performed our own analysis of DMDC’s PERSTEMPO data. This analysis of PERSTEMPO data shows that the Army personnel tempo average rose substantially from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2004 and then rose more slowly in fiscal year 2005 and fiscal year 2006. In contrast,

the Marine Corps personnel tempo average peaked in fiscal year 2003. Table 3 shows the results of our analysis.

Table 3: GAO Calculations of Army and Marine Corps Personnel Tempos

| Service | Personnel tempo measure | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2002 | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2003 | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2004 | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2005 | Tempo (days) for fiscal year 2006 |
|--------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Army | (by deployed personnel only) | 28.3 | 77.1 | 92.5 | 97.6 | 104.9 |
| Marine Corps | (by deployed personnel only) | 34.6 | 63.9 | 49.3 | 57.5 | 60.1 |

Source: GAO analysis of DMDC PERSTEMPO data.

Note: The PERSTEMPO data that support these analyses are unreliable.

Our analysis shows similar trends to the trends from the 2005 Annual Defense Report to the President and the Congress. However, there are differences in figures, which may be attributed to differences in data analysis assumptions. (See app. III for additional information concerning the methodology for our analysis.) In addition, our analysis includes fiscal years 2005 and 2006 but it does not include fiscal year 2001 data. Finally, our analysis is subject to the same major limitation as the trend information from the Annual Defense Report because our data were drawn from the same source that was found to be incomplete or inaccurate because the Army and Marine Corps lack quality control procedures for collecting these data and reporting them to DMDC.

Appendix II: Retention/Attrition Rates for Enlisted Occupational Specialties with Unusually High or Low Deployment Rates

This appendix responds to the requirement that we identify enlisted occupational specialties that are experiencing unusually high or low deployment rates and analyze retention rates for those occupational specialties.¹ The Department of Defense (DOD) collects and tracks retention data for its active component forces but it uses attrition rather than retention data in managing its reserve component forces. This appendix contains retention/attrition rate data for enlisted occupational specialties that have experienced unusually high or low deployment rates, but it does not attempt to make any conclusions concerning relationships between deployment and retention or attrition rates because other factors, beyond deployment, can affect retention. Specifically, previous studies and surveys have indicated that in addition to deployments, a wide variety of other factors influence servicemembers' decisions regarding whether or not to stay in the military. Some of these factors include basic pay, reenlistment bonuses, family medical care, quality of leadership, and civilian career opportunities.

Service Retention and Attrition Tracking

The Army tracks retention rates by initial term (first enlistment, regardless of length), mid-career (second or subsequent enlistments up to 10 years of service), and career (10 or more years of service). The Marine Corps tracks retention by first enlistment and second or subsequent enlistment. DOD tracks National Guard and Reserve attrition rates, which are defined as the number of service members who leave those components in a given year divided by the components' average strength as measured at the beginning of the fiscal year and at the end of that fiscal year.

Enlisted Occupational Specialties with Unusually High or Low Deployment Rates

To determine which enlisted occupational specialties had unusually high or low deployment rates, we used several steps. First we obtained fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2006 data from the Defense Manpower Data Center's (DMDC) end strength files and from its Contingency Tracking System Deployment file. We then analyzed these files by military occupational specialty (MOS), and for each MOS we determined the yearly end strength population, the population of deployed personnel, the number of days the deployed population could have possibly served, and the number of days the deployed population actually served.

¹Pub. L. No. 109-364, §345 (2006).

We then calculated two deployment measures for each occupational specialty. First we calculated a days-served ratio by dividing the total number of days the deployed population actually served in fiscal year 2006 by the number of days they could have possibly served in fiscal year 2006. Second we calculated a population ratio by dividing the deployed MOS population in fiscal year 2006 by the total MOS population in fiscal year 2006. We then calculated the quartiles for both the days-served ratio and the population ratio. If both the days-served ratio and the population ratio for an occupational specialty were in the highest quartile, then the occupational specialty was classified as having an unusually high deployment rate. If both measures were in the bottom quartile then the occupational specialty was classified as having an unusually low deployment rate. After we identified the occupational specialties with unusually high and low deployment rates, we requested and DMDC provided retention/attrition data for each of those specialties for fiscal years 2001 through 2006.

Active Component Retention Rates

Table 4 shows active component Army and Marine Corps retention rates for personnel in occupational specialties with unusually high or unusually low deployment rates. For purposes of this table, a person is considered retained if, at the end of the year, the person is on active duty and holds a primary MOS with the same two first digits as the first two digits of the MOS that the person held at the beginning of the year.

Table 4: Retention Rates for Active Component Army and Marine Corps Enlisted Occupational Specialties with Unusually High or Low Deployment Rates

| Service | Occupational specialty | Code | Occupation population | | Retention rates (percent) | | | | | |
|---------|---|------|-----------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | FY 2001 | FY 2006 | FY 2001 | FY 2002 | FY 2003 | FY 2004 | FY 2005 | FY 2006 |
| | Unusually high deployment rates | | | | | | | | | |
| Army | Cannon Crewmember | 13B | 9987 | 9487 | 79.3 | 77.9 | 85.3 | 82.8 | 79.3 | 83.7 |
| Army | Combat Engineer | 21B | 0 | 9109 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 88.1 | 81.5 | 82.1 |
| Army | Bridge Crewmember | 21C | 0 | 781 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 84.6 | 80.6 | 77.7 |
| Army | Artillery Mechanic | 63D | 621 | 650 | 85.5 | 83.1 | 87.5 | 78.1 | 81.2 | 85.2 |
| Army | Field Artillery Firefinder Radar Operator | 13R | 466 | 586 | 77.5 | 82.6 | 86.1 | 83.1 | 79.4 | 79.5 |
| Army | Technical Engineer | 21T | 0 | 261 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 84.6 | 77.7 | 87.7 |
| Army | Cannon Fire Direction Specialist | 13E | 1603 | 258 | 80.4 | 79.7 | 84.5 | 78.7 | 69.1 | 79.5 |

**Appendix II: Retention/Attrition Rates for
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Unusually High or Low Deployment Rates**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-----|------|-------|------|------|-------|------|-------|
| Army | Interior Electrician | 21R | 0 | 157 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 72.7 | 84.1 |
| Army | Tactical Automated Fire Control Systems Specialist | 13C | 746 | 52 | 81.1 | 82.6 | 85.9 | 69.7 | 74.5 | 88.5 |
| USMC | Digital Wideband Transmission Equipment Operator | 0622 | 2 | 576 | 100.0 | 79.1 | 79.8 | 81.0 | 69.3 | 70.3 |
| USMC | Fire Support Man | 0861 | 382 | 430 | 76.7 | 79.0 | 76.5 | 81.2 | 82.9 | 86.0 |
| USMC | Unit Level Circuit Switch (ULCS) Operator/Maintainer | 0614 | 3 | 386 | 100.0 | 81.5 | 86.1 | 82.5 | 78.4 | 77.2 |
| USMC | SHF Satellite Communicators Operator/Maintainer | 0627 | 0 | 208 | 0.0 | 84.1 | 74.8 | 80.8 | 77.5 | 68.8 |
| USMC | Tactical Data Systems Equipment (TDSE) Repairer | 5962 | 111 | 124 | 84.7 | 83.5 | 78.3 | 81.7 | 73.8 | 74.2 |
| USMC | Aviation Radio Repairer | 5937 | 139 | 103 | 74.8 | 82.5 | 86.4 | 76.7 | 65.5 | 80.6 |
| USMC | Field Artillery Radar Operator | 0842 | 92 | 100 | 84.8 | 75.2 | 76.9 | 82.1 | 77.0 | 72.0 |
| USMC | Tactical Air Operations Module Repairer | 5963 | 80 | 78 | 70.0 | 78.7 | 81.3 | 85.5 | 69.0 | 71.8 |
| Unusually low deployment rates | | | | | | | | | | |
| Army | Microwave Systems Operator-Maintainer | 25P | 0 | 1054 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 78.8 | 79.2 |
| Army | Watercraft Operator | 88K | 729 | 538 | 87.1 | 80.5 | 75.7 | 74.6 | 82.8 | 87.7 |
| Army | Mortuary Affairs Specialist | 92M | 412 | 445 | 85.4 | 86.8 | 85.6 | 81.6 | 85.3 | 88.5 |
| Army | Combat Documentation/Production Specialist | 25V | 487 | 371 | 86.2 | 84.2 | 86.3 | 84.1 | 82.5 | 88.7 |
| Army | Watercraft Engineer | 88L | 410 | 330 | 85.6 | 84.1 | 83.6 | 79.8 | 75.4 | 83.0 |
| Army | Senior Non-Commissioned Logistician | 92Z | 145 | 159 | 84.8 | 74.5 | 76.0 | 77.8 | 72.0 | 71.1 |
| Army | Satellite/Microwave Systems Chief | 25T ^a | 0 | 73 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 70.4 | 68.5 |
| Army | Health Care Specialist | 68W ^a | 0 | 10 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| USMC | Basic Motor Transport Marine | 3500 | 215 | 768 | 93.5 | 87.6 | 90.7 | 87.9 | 92.8 | 89.1 |
| USMC | Corrections Specialist | 5831 | 683 | 615 | 83.0 | 78.3 | 78.7 | 81.1 | 84.4 | 79.3 |
| USMC | Basic Aircraft Maintenance Marine | 6000 ^a | 293 | 486 | 92.8 | 91.8 | 91.2 | 94.0 | 89.6 | 88.5 |
| USMC | Basic Data/Communications Maintenance Marine | 2800 | 554 | 459 | 86.1 | 84.8 | 83.2 | 82.7 | 79.7 | 81.7 |
| USMC | Basic Ground Ordnance Maintenance Marine | 2100 | 178 | 310 | 86.0 | 83.3 | 83.5 | 91.5 | 90.8 | 89.0 |
| USMC | Basic Electronics Maintenance Marine | 5900 | 119 | 246 | 85.7 | 63.3 | 73.5 | 41.4 | 48.0 | 35.4 |
| USMC | Basic Logistics Marines | 0400 | 26 | 237 | 88.5 | 96.9 | 88.2 | 94.9 | 89.0 | 92.8 |

**Appendix II: Retention/Attrition Rates for
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| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|--|-------------------|----|-----|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| USMC | Basic Tank and Assault Amphibious Vehicle Crewman | 1800 | 60 | 177 | 83.3 | 77.4 | 34.8 | 83.7 | 88.0 | 74.0 |
| USMC | Tiltrotor Mechanic, MV-22 | 6116 ^a | 0 | 138 | 0.0 | 88.0 | 79.1 | 93.6 | 98.8 | 92.0 |
| USMC | Basic Food Service Marine | 3300 | 45 | 123 | 88.9 | 91.3 | 82.7 | 88.7 | 91.2 | 87.0 |
| USMC | Criminal Investigator CID Agent | 5821 | 73 | 107 | 87.7 | 87.1 | 88.3 | 81.3 | 94.9 | 86.0 |
| USMC | CASS EO Configuration Operator/Maintainer/Technician/IMA | 6466 ^a | 69 | 75 | 88.4 | 84.3 | 87.0 | 89.2 | 80.9 | 77.3 |
| USMC | Combat Illustrator | 4611 | 57 | 50 | 89.5 | 83.6 | 79.1 | 80.3 | 80.3 | 72.0 |
| USMC | Basic Legal Services Marine | 4400 | 21 | 41 | 95.2 | 83.3 | 100.0 | 95.7 | 86.4 | 92.7 |
| USMC | Tactical Air Operations Module/Air Defense Technician | 5979 | 35 | 32 | 80.0 | 80.0 | 84.4 | 82.1 | 96.4 | 84.4 |
| USMC | Basic Meteorology and Oceanography (METOC) Marine | 6800 ^a | 13 | 15 | 100.0 | 80.0 | 88.9 | 93.3 | 93.3 | 86.7 |
| USMC | Small Ensemble Leader | 5522 | 0 | 13 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 76.9 |
| USMC | Basic Marine Air Ground Task Force | 0500 | 1 | 11 | 100.0 | 0.0 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 80.0 | 100.0 |

Source: GAO analysis based on DMDC data.

^aSeveral factors can lead to wide fluctuations in retention rates. For example, some new occupational specialties have been introduced while other specialties have been phased out. In addition, some specialties include recruits, trainees, or officer candidates. Retention rates for those specialties are very low because personnel generally graduate from the programs and are given different occupational specialty codes. For clarity in reporting, we are not reporting retention rates for these occupational codes or for occupations that have been phased out or which had less than 10 personnel in fiscal year 2006.

Reserve Component Attrition Rates

Table 5 shows reserve component Army and Marine Corps attrition rates for personnel in enlisted occupational specialties with unusually high or unusually low deployment rates. For purposes of this table, a person is generally considered attrited if, at the end of the year, the person is no longer in the Selected Reserve or if the person holds a primary MOS where the first two digits differ from the first two digits of the MOS that the person held at the beginning of the year.

**Appendix II: Retention/Attrition Rates for
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Table 5: Attrition Rates for Reserve Component Army and Marine Corps Enlisted Occupational Specialties with Unusually High or Low Deployment Rates

| | | | Occupation population | | Attrition rates (percent) | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Service component | Occupational specialties | Code | FY 2001 | FY 2006 | FY 2001 | FY 2002 | FY 2003 | FY 2004 | FY 2005 | FY 2006 |
| | Unusually high deployment rates | | | | | | | | | |
| USAR | Civil Affairs Specialist (RC) | 38A | 1,630 | 2,515 | 22.6 | 22.5 | 14.2 | 22.2 | 16.1 | 19.4 |
| USAR | Psychological Operations Specialist | 37F | 1,032 | 1,410 | 21.2 | 20.4 | 15.1 | 27.8 | 20.6 | 20.3 |
| USAR | Cable Systems Installer-Maintainer | 25L ^a | - | 769 | - | - | - | - | 16.7 | 20.9 |
| USAR | CH-47 Helicopter Repairer | 15U ^a | - | 298 | - | - | - | 18.3 | 19.6 | 25.2 |
| USAR | Human Intelligence Collector | 97E | 232 | 272 | 30.6 | 21.6 | 18.7 | 26.8 | 30.0 | 21.0 |
| USAR | Visual Information Equipment Operator-Maintainer | 25R | 50 | 55 | 24.0 | 25.5 | 24.6 | 23.2 | 18.5 | 25.5 |
| USAR | Personnel Services Specialist | 75H ^a | 5,613 | 29 | 20.1 | 20.4 | 18.0 | 99.9 | 80.6 | 79.3 |
| USAR | Land Combat Electronics Missile System Repairer | 35A ^a | - | 12 | - | - | - | - | - | 75.0 |
| USAR | Radar Repairer | 35M | 6 | 10 | 83.3 | 25.0 | 40.0 | 52.9 | 41.7 | 60.0 |
| ARNG | Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) Crewmember | 13M | 1,985 | 1,957 | 20.2 | 19.6 | 16.7 | 15.8 | 24.0 | 15.4 |
| ARNG | Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) Operational Fire Direction Specialist | 13P | 691 | 894 | 20.1 | 21.6 | 17.9 | 15.2 | 26.2 | 14.7 |
| ARNG | Electronic Maintenance Chief | 35W ^a | 226 | 230 | 16.4 | 16.7 | 13.2 | 10.1 | 20.9 | 79.1 |
| ARNG | Special Forces Engineer Sergeant | 18C | 237 | 196 | 13.9 | 10.2 | 11.0 | 20.0 | 21.4 | 8.7 |
| ARNG | Land Combat Electronics Missile System Repairer | 35A ^a | - | 159 | - | - | - | - | 100.0 | 91.2 |
| ARNG | Army Bandperson | 02A ^a | - | 147 | - | - | - | - | 40.0 | 99.3 |
| ARNG | CH-47 Helicopter Repairer | 67U ^a | 894 | 96 | 16.4 | 15.7 | 14.5 | 77.6 | 67.9 | 86.5 |
| ARNG | AVENGER System Repairer | 35T ^a | - | 86 | - | - | - | - | - | 95.3 |
| ARNG | Utility Airplane Repairer (RC) | 67G ^a | 119 | 72 | 16.0 | 17.7 | 20.0 | 28.6 | 36.4 | 44.4 |
| ARNG | Construction Engineering Supervisor | 51H ^a | 793 | 71 | 14.8 | 14.9 | 16.5 | 50.3 | 85.7 | 90.1 |
| ARNG | Special Forces Assistant Operations and Intelligence Sergeant | 18F | 85 | 66 | 16.5 | 8.5 | 11.6 | 23.4 | 11.3 | 12.1 |
| ARNG | Interior Electrician | 51R ^a | 671 | 63 | 24.6 | 22.1 | 17.2 | 52.4 | 83.7 | 90.5 |

**Appendix II: Retention/Attrition Rates for
Enlisted Occupational Specialties with
Unusually High or Low Deployment Rates**

| Service component | Occupational specialties | Code | Occupation population | | Attrition rates (percent) | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | FY 2001 | FY 2006 | FY 2001 | FY 2002 | FY 2003 | FY 2004 | FY 2005 | FY 2006 |
| ARNG | Integrated Family of Test Equipment Operator/Maintainer | 35Y ^a | 51 | 62 | 21.6 | 17.6 | 16.2 | 25.0 | 33.3 | 93.5 |
| ARNG | Information Systems Chief | 74Z ^a | 64 | 36 | 14.1 | 14.7 | 8.5 | 15.4 | 72.4 | 97.2 |
| ARNG | Plumber | 51K ^a | 393 | 35 | 26.0 | 20.8 | 16.8 | 50.5 | 86.1 | 82.9 |
| ARNG | General Engineering Supervisor | 51Z ^a | 231 | 20 | 15.6 | 15.4 | 16.2 | 50.0 | 87.6 | 90.0 |
| ARNG | Communications Interceptor/Locator | 98H ^a | 41 | 20 | 31.7 | 36.6 | 32.4 | 37.2 | 45.9 | 5.0 |
| ARNG | APACHE Attack Helicopter Systems Repairer | 35K ^a | - | 13 | - | - | - | - | 100.0 | 92.3 |
| USMCR | Field Artillery Cannoneer | 0811 | 791 | 821 | 19.0 | 20.0 | 19.5 | 25.4 | 21.6 | 21.0 |
| USMCR | Basic Field Artillery Man | 0800 | 142 | 113 | 34.5 | 21.8 | 33.6 | 30.5 | 14.7 | 31.0 |
| USMCR | Artillery Meteorological Man | 0847 | 8 | 33 | 37.5 | 14.3 | 15.8 | 6.1 | 16.2 | 18.2 |
| USMCR | Ground Radio Repairer | 2841 ^a | 310 | 32 | 24.5 | 21.8 | 21.5 | 36.6 | 25.5 | 59.4 |
| Unusually low deployment rates | | | | | | | | | | |
| USAR | Recruiter | 79R | 1,628 | 1,548 | 12.0 | 11.6 | 11.9 | 18.9 | 15.4 | 14.7 |
| USAR | Army Bandperson | 42R ^a | - | 649 | - | - | - | - | - | 9.4 |
| USAR | Field Artillery Automated Tactical Data System Specialist | 13D ^a | - | 76 | - | - | 50.0 | 44.4 | 55.0 | 42.1 |
| USAR | M1 ABRAMS Tank System Maintainer | 63A ^a | 1 | 71 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 62.5 | 30.0 | 42.9 | 47.9 |
| USAR | Optical Laboratory Specialist | 91H ^a | - | 56 | - | 66.7 | 16.0 | 19.0 | 23.5 | 30.4 |
| USAR | Transmission & Distribution Specialist (RC) | 21Q ^a | - | 17 | - | - | - | 31.6 | 20.0 | 23.5 |
| USAR | UH-1 Helicopter Repairer (RC) | 15M ^a | - | 11 | - | - | - | 36.4 | 66.7 | 54.5 |
| USAR | Electronic Maintenance Chief | 94W ^a | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | 20.0 |
| ARNG | Recruiter | 79R | 101 | 34 | 34.7 | 28.4 | 31.3 | 38.0 | 26.3 | 52.9 |
| ARNG | Satellite Communications Systems Operator-Maintainer | 25S ^a | - | 25 | - | - | - | - | 100.0 | 12.0 |
| ARNG | CID Special Agent | 31D ^a | - | 22 | - | - | - | - | 45.8 | 22.7 |
| ARNG | Career Counselor | 79S | 104 | 15 | 29.8 | 35.3 | 27.0 | 30.4 | 12.5 | 40.0 |
| ARNG | Transmission & Distribution Specialist (RC) | 21Q ^a | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | 20.0 |
| USMCR | Engineer Equipment Mechanic | 1341 | 334 | 370 | 21.6 | 26.9 | 17.8 | 26.4 | 20.4 | 20.5 |
| USMCR | Aviation Supply Specialist | 6672 | 252 | 221 | 23.4 | 19.7 | 21.1 | 22.7 | 23.5 | 21.7 |
| USMCR | Water Support Technician | 1171 | 185 | 203 | 25.9 | 29.5 | 22.8 | 15.5 | 18.8 | 25.6 |

**Appendix II: Retention/Attrition Rates for
Enlisted Occupational Specialties with
Unusually High or Low Deployment Rates**

| Service component | Occupational specialties | Code | Occupation population | | Attrition rates (percent) | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | FY 2001 | FY 2006 | FY 2001 | FY 2002 | FY 2003 | FY 2004 | FY 2005 | FY 2006 |
| USMCR | Aviation Information Systems (AIS) Specialist | 6694 ^a | - | 53 | - | - | 11.1 | 9.4 | 20.7 | 15.1 |
| USMCR | METOC Observer | 6821 | 30 | 48 | 26.7 | 51.6 | 18.2 | 13.3 | 8.3 | 10.4 |
| USMCR | Helicopter Airframe Mechanic, CH-53 | 6153 | 20 | 28 | 25.0 | 28.6 | 13.6 | 12.5 | 7.7 | 14.3 |
| USMCR | Individual Material Readiness List (IMRL) Asset Manager | 6042 | 14 | 26 | 14.3 | 11.8 | 21.7 | 8.7 | 23.1 | 38.5 |
| USMCR | Legal Services Specialist | 4421 | 47 | 25 | 42.6 | 36.8 | 30.3 | 37.5 | 29.6 | 40.0 |
| USMCR | Aircraft Maintenance Chief | 6019 | 36 | 25 | 22.2 | 29.0 | 32.0 | 25.9 | 40.0 | 16.0 |
| USMCR | Aviation Radar Repairer | 5942 | 3 | 20 | 33.3 | 14.3 | 33.3 | 21.4 | 17.6 | 10.0 |
| USMCR | Aircraft Communications / Navigation / Electrical Systems Technician, CH-53 | 6323 | 17 | 20 | 11.8 | 28.6 | 4.3 | 20.0 | 27.3 | 35.0 |
| USMCR | Aircraft Communications Systems Technician, IMA | 6412 | 18 | 19 | 5.6 | 22.2 | 17.6 | 23.5 | 6.7 | 15.8 |
| USMCR | Fixed-Wing Aircraft Power Plants Mechanic, F-404 | 6227 | 13 | 18 | 30.8 | - | 25.0 | - | 20.0 | 16.7 |
| USMCR | Aircraft Electronic Countermeasures Systems Technician, Helicopter, IMA | 6483 | 9 | 15 | 22.2 | - | 14.3 | 7.1 | 7.7 | 13.3 |
| USMCR | Helicopter Power Plants Mechanic, T-64 | 6123 | 11 | 11 | 9.1 | 6.7 | 26.7 | 27.3 | 27.3 | 27.3 |

Source: GAO analysis based on DMDC data.

^aSeveral factors can lead to wide fluctuations in attrition rates. For example, some new occupational specialties have been introduced while other specialties have been phased out. In addition some specialties include recruits, trainees, or officer candidates. Attrition rates for those specialties are very high because personnel generally graduate from the programs and are given different occupational specialty codes. For clarity in reporting, we are not reporting attrition rates for these occupational codes or for occupations that have been phased out or which had less than 10 personnel in fiscal year 2006.

In examining tables 4 and 5, it is important to note that personnel in some high-deploying occupational specialties may not be deploying for their chosen specialty. For example, many personnel with field artillery occupational specialties have been deployed to perform military police or security functions. For these personnel, retention decisions may be influenced not only by the factors previously cited (basic pay, reenlistment bonuses, family medical care, quality of leadership, and civilian career opportunities) but also by the fact that they have been deployed and are working outside of their chosen occupational specialties. For individual

**Appendix II: Retention/Attrition Rates for
Enlisted Occupational Specialties with
Unusually High or Low Deployment Rates**

servicemembers these other factors may have a larger impact on retention decisions than their deployment rates.

Appendix III: Scope and Methodology

To assess the extent to which changes in mobilization and deployment policies have affected reserve component availability and provided an approach to meet the requirements for the global war on terrorism, we reviewed and analyzed past and present Department of Defense (DOD) mobilization and deployment policies as well as requirements for the global war on terrorism, comparing the effects of policies before and after Secretary Gates' January 19, 2007, memorandum regarding the utilization of the total force. Specifically, we discussed the implementation of mobilization authorities and the effects of various personnel policies with responsible officials from the (1) Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Arlington, Virginia; (2) Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Arlington, Virginia; (3) Joint Chiefs of Staff, Arlington, Virginia; (4) Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Arlington, Virginia; and (5) Commandant, Marine Corps (Manpower, Plans, and Policy), Quantico Marine Corps Base, Virginia.

In meetings with the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD), Joint Staff, and service officials, we discussed the effects of reserve mobilization and deployment policies enacted following the September 11, 2001, attacks; the advantages and disadvantages of those policies when compared to the policies implemented on and after the January 19, 2007, when the Secretary of Defense issued a total force policy memorandum; and, the impact of policies on the availability of reserve component members for future mobilizations and deployments. We also discussed the use of special pays and bonuses as instruments that could encourage reserve component members to volunteer for mobilizations that exceeded the prior 24-cumulative-month time limitation on involuntary mobilizations. Finally, we collected and reviewed data regarding the population of previously mobilized reserve component members to determine reserve component availability under the prior 24-cumulative-month limitation.

To assess the extent to which DOD, the Army, and the Marine Corps have collected, maintained, and reported complete and accurate personnel tempo data, we reviewed legislation and DOD policies regarding personnel tempo; Army, Marine Corps, and DOD systems and procedures for collecting and reporting personnel tempo data; and previous inspections and reviews of the personnel tempo data.

We examined legislation to identify the definition of personnel tempo and related terms; the reporting requirements for DOD and the military departments; the assignment of roles and responsibilities; the thresholds for identifying high-deploying personnel and the corresponding provisions for compensation; and the conditions for modifying the personnel tempo

provisions or issuing waivers to those provisions. We also examined corresponding DOD and service policies concerning the collection and management of personnel tempo data. We also reviewed DOD's Annual Reports to the President and the Congress, which congressional legislation identified as the means for transmitting personnel tempo data. We compared and contrasted the DOD guidance on personnel tempo and deployment data collection that was issued before the personnel tempo oversight and compensation provisions were waived in October 2001 to guidance that was issued after the waiver.

We also discussed the implementation and efficacy of DOD and service personnel tempo and deployment and activation data collection policies with responsible officials from the (1) Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Arlington, Virginia, including Military Personnel Policy, Arlington, Virginia and Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC West), Seaside, California; (2) Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs, Arlington, Virginia; (3) Department of the Army, Human Resources Command, including Alexandria, Virginia (Active) and St. Louis, Missouri (Reserve); (4) United States Marine Corps, Manpower Plans and Policy Division, Quantico Marine Corps Base, Virginia; (5) United States Marine Corps, Inspection Division, Office of the Inspector General, Quantico Marine Corps Base, Virginia; and (6) National Guard Bureau, G-1, Selected Reserve Branch, Arlington, Virginia.

We compiled and reviewed documentation on DOD and service evaluations, inspections, and reviews of personnel tempo data. In addition, we reviewed documentation on the DMDC and service systems used to collect, process, and archive personnel tempo and deployment data. Furthermore, we reviewed the personnel tempo proposal submitted by OSD to Congress for consideration in the upcoming national defense authorization act and conferred with our Office of General Counsel regarding its status and potential impact.

Although not part of our reporting objectives, in order to meet the reporting requirements of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 we provide data on personnel tempo trends in appendix I, and retention rates for enlisted occupational specialties that have experienced unusually high or low deployment rates in appendix II.

To develop personnel tempo trends, we analyzed fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2006 data from the DMDC Personnel Tempo (PERSTEMPO) database using statistical analysis software (SAS). We also obtained and analyzed

fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2006 data from the DMDC end strength databases—the Active Duty Military Personnel Master File and the Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System. Using the PERSTEMPO and end strength data, we completed an analysis identifying the yearly end strength population, the population of deployed personnel, and the total number of cumulative days deployed. Because of known limitations in the PERSTEMPO database, we completed a comparative analysis with fiscal years 2001-2006 data from the DMDC Contingency Tracking System (CTS) Deployment and Activation File datasets. Using the CTS and end strength data, we completed an analysis identifying the yearly end strength population, the population of deployed personnel, and the total number of cumulative days deployed. From these three figures, we calculated the yearly personnel tempo average for each database—PERSTEMPO, CTS Deployment File, and CTS Activation File. We compared the resulting calculations as well as the corresponding trends as one measure of the reliability of the PERSTEMPO data. To assess the reliability of the PERSTEMPO data, we spoke with knowledgeable DMDC officials about data quality issues and the internal controls on the system, and we reviewed prior GAO work on the PERSTEMPO data and system. Based on this information, we determined the PERSTEMPO data were not reliable indices of personnel tempo trends. We did not use PERSTEMPO data to support findings or recommendations and present PERSTEMPO data only in appendix I, with the associated data reliability caveats, because of the known limitations in the reliability of the data. These data are included in appendix I because of the legislative mandate to provide personnel tempo trends, and despite the known limitations, they are the only data DOD maintains on personnel tempo for all global war on terrorism contingencies.

To determine retention rates for enlisted occupational specialties that have experienced unusually high or low deployment rates, we obtained fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2006 data from the DMDC CTS Deployment File, and active and reserve end strength files. Using these data, we calculated deployment statistics and defined the occupational specialties experiencing unusually high or low deployment rates based on quartile analysis. The identified occupational specialties were then transmitted to DMDC, and DMDC provided retention or attrition data for each occupation specialty for the fiscal years 2001-2006 period. To assess the reliability of CTS and end strength data, we spoke with DMDC officials who were knowledgeable of the data and systems, reviewed data system documentation, obtained written responses to questions regarding the internal controls on the systems, reviewed previous GAO work on the data and systems, and performed electronic data tests for anomalous and

missing data. We determined the CTS and end strength data we used were reliable for the purposes of this report. To ensure the accuracy of GAO's analysis, all programs were verified for logic and accuracy by an independent reviewer.

We discussed our methodology for calculating and tabulating these data with officials from the (1) Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Arlington, Virginia, including Military Personnel Policy, Arlington, Virginia and Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC West), Seaside, California; (2) Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs, Arlington, Virginia; (3) Department of the Army, Human Resources Command, Alexandria, Virginia (Active); (4) National Guard Bureau, G-1, Selected Reserve Branch, Arlington, Virginia; and (5) United States Marine Corps, Manpower Plans and Policy Division, Quantico Marine Corps Base, Virginia. The following list contains details about the methods and assumption we used in analyzing DMDC data files:

1. End-of-September End Strength files were used to represent the end strength for the preceding fiscal year for both active and reserve servicemembers.
2. For the yearly analysis, the number of days activated/deployed includes both the day the activation or deployment started and the day it ended.
3. For activations or deployments that extend across fiscal years, the days for each year are counted through September 30 of that year and subsequent days are attributed to the following year.
4. Activations or deployments that began in fiscal years 2005-2006 and had "unknown" end dates were included in the yearly analysis because the missing dates could indicate ongoing activations or deployments.
5. Activations or deployments that began in fiscal years 2001-2004 and had "unknown" end dates were excluded from the yearly analysis based on the assumption that activations or deployments do not typically extend for 2 years and the dates more likely represent "missing" data.
6. The MOS analysis was based on Primary Service Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS) codes.
7. In instances of data anomalies, we communicated with DMDC and incorporated their suggestions for resolution.

-
8. The data we received from DMDC contained no PERSTEMPO events that began in fiscal year 2001.

Because there are a variety of factors affecting retention for which we were not able to account in our analysis, we did not attempt to make any conclusions concerning the relationship between deployment and retention or attrition rates. However, we collected and reviewed information about some of these other factors that affect retention.

We conducted our work from June 2006 to May 2007 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Appendix IV: Comments from the Department of Defense

Note: GAO comments supplementing those in the report text appear at the end of this appendix.



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1500

JUN 29 2007

Ms. Sharon L. Pickup
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Pickup:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report, "MILITARY PERSONNEL: DoD Lacks Reliable Personnel Tempo Data and Needs Quality Controls to Improve Data Accuracy," dated June 1, 2007 (GAO Code 350868).

The DoD primary action officer for this GAO study is LtCol Greg Bennett, OASD/RA(M&P), who can be reached at (703) 693-2241 or via e-mail at gregory.bennett@osd.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. F. Hall".

T. F. Hall

Attachment:
As stated



GAO DRAFT REPORT – DATED JUNE 1, 2007
GAO CODE 350868/GAO-07-780

**“MILITARY PERSONNEL: DoD Lacks Reliable Personnel Tempo Data and Needs Quality
Controls to Improve Data Accuracy”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to provide guidance, which directs the Army and Marine Corps to develop quality control procedures for validating the accuracy of the personnel tempo data they collect and report to DMDC, whether under the existing personnel tempo definition or under any revised definitions that Congress may approve.

DOD RESPONSE: The Department concurs with the recommendation.

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS**

1. 1st Page, 1st Paragraph, 1st Sentence:

Recommendation: Rewrite 1st sentence as follows: “Congress has repeatedly expressed concerns about the pace of military operations; and since 2001, approximately 931,000 U.S. Army and Marine Corps service members, have deployed for military operations abroad in support of the Global War on Terrorism, including approximately 312,000 Guard and Reserve members.”

Rationale: Accuracy in the reported number deployed.

2. 1st Page, 1st Paragraph:

Recommendation: Rewrite the 1st paragraph as follows: “Congress has repeatedly expressed concerns about the pace of military operations. Utilizing the Partial Mobilization Authority (10 U.S. Code 12302) as authorized by Presidential Executive Order 13223 on September 14, 2001, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps have deployed approximately 931,000 members, of which approximately 312,000 have been Guard and Reserve, for military operations abroad in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Prior to this authorization, and as a result of Congressional concerns the Department of Defense was required to report personnel tempo to Congress as mandated in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (FY 2000 NDAA).¹ Title 37 of the U.S. Code was amended with the addition of a section requiring the secretaries of the military services to pay high-deployment compensation payments to service members for lengthy or numerous deployments in excess of set limits.² A section was added to Title 10 of the U.S. Code requiring management of deployments of service members in danger of exceeding high-deployment days thresholds.³ Sections were added to Title 10 of the U.S. Code requiring the Secretary of Defense to include personnel tempo information in his annual report to the

See comment 1.

See comment 2.

President and Congress⁴ and making the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OSD P&R) responsible for monitoring personnel tempo and establishing related standards and policies, subject to the authority, direction and control of the Secretary of Defense.⁵

Rationale: There are several disparate issues that are being addressed in the original paragraph as written. 1) Implication that the Congress has recently placed statutory limits on the numbers of reserve personnel that can be involuntarily called to active duty due to concern about the negative effects on individual service members and service readiness. The legislative authorities have been implemented over the last 60 years and have been modified as needed to address certain requirements and grant certain levels of authority. None of the involuntary recall legislative authorities have been modified as a result of current military operations in support of the Global War on Terror and 2) that personnel tempo issues are related to the time limit that an individual may be involuntarily activated. The third sentence, of the paragraph, implies that the time limits in the involuntary activation legislative authorities are related to the personnel tempo issues that were addressed in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2000. Personnel tempo applies to both the Active and Reserve Components and addresses compensation, management and reporting of individuals that exceed certain deployment standards. Personnel tempo does not place any restrictions on the time duration that a reserve service member may be involuntarily activated.

3. 6th Page, "Results in Brief," 1st Paragraph, 4th Sentence:

Recommendation: Rewrite 1st sentence as follows: *"For example, as of August 31, 2006, almost 421,000 reserve component personnel had been activated..."*

Rationale: Accuracy in the reported number activated.

4. 10th Page, "Reserve Mobilization," 1st para, 2nd Sentence:

Recommendation: Rewrite 2nd sentence as follows: *"Most reserve component members who have been called to active duty for other than normal training since September 11, 2001, have been activated under one of the three legislative authorities listed in table 1."*

Rationale: Service members are activated either in either a voluntary status or an involuntary status. Service member are not mobilized in a voluntary status.

See comment 3.

See comment 4.

See comment 5.

5. 10th Page, "Reserve Mobilization," Table 1: Mobilization Authorities:
Recommendation: Change table to reflect the following **bold** changes:

Table 1: Activation Authorities

| Statute | Type of Activation | Maximum Number of Ready Reserve Members Who Can Be Activated at Once | Maximum Length of Activation |
|---|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 10 U.S.C. 12301 (d) "With members consent" | Voluntary | Unlimited | Unlimited |
| 10 U.S.C. 12302 "Partial Mobilization" | Involuntary | 1,000,000 | 730 days/24 consecutive months |
| 10 U.S.C. 12304 "Presidential Reserve Call-up" | Involuntary | 200,000 | 365 days/12 consecutive months |

Rationale: 10 USC 12301(d) is not full mobilization but rather activation with the members consent (voluntary activation). The full mobilization authority is 12301(a), which is not a voluntary activation. The words activation and activated better reflect the status of an individual who has been called to active duty under one of the authorities listed above. 10 USC 1230 was an incomplete cite of the legislative section, it should be 12304.

6. 10th Page, "Reserve Mobilization," Table 1: Mobilization Authorities:

Recommendation: Annotate that 10 USC 12304 was used to support ongoing operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and has not been utilized since 2004.

Rationale: Provides clarity on the use of the three authorities. The table currently implies that all three legislative authorities have been utilized to support operations in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Nobel Eagle and Iraqi Freedom.

7. 16th Page, 1st Paragraph, 1st Line:

Recommendation: Rewrite sentence as follows: "According to DOD data, almost 421,000 reserve component personnel were currently activated or had been previously activated as of August 31, 2006."

Rational: Accuracy in numbers reported.

8. 18th Page, "Mobilization policy Changes..." Last Paragraph, 1st Sentence:

Recommendation: Rewrite sentence as follows: "The new guidance specifies that future involuntary mobilizations will generally be limited to 12 months, with possible service exceptions for individual skill training required for deployment and post-mobilization leave, and other exceptions if approved by the Secretary of Defense."

Rationale: Pre-deployment training implies block unit training. The Secretary of Defense has stipulated that only individual skill training, i.e. military occupational skills, will be permitted.

9. 19th Page, Footnote 25 (and elsewhere it the report):

See comment 8.

Recommendation: Rewrite last sentence as follows: *"The secretaries of the military departments will be able to add other operational commitments discretionally."*
Rational: Proper usage, the military has secretaries of the military departments not service secretaries.

See comment 1.

10. 25th, "Conclusions," 1st Paragraph, 1st Line:
Recommendation: Change "1.5 million" to "931K"
Rationale: There have been approximately 931K Army and Marine Corps personnel that have deployed in support of the GWOT, not the 1.5 million stated.

See comment 9.

11. 30th Page, "Service retention and Attrition Tracking" last line on page:
Recommendation: Change to read "DoD tracks National Guard and Reserve attrition rates, which is defined as the number of service members who leave those components in a given year divided by the components' average strength as measured at the beginning of the fiscal year and at the end of that fiscal year."
Rationale: DoD does not track strength through the use of attrition, attrition is calculated as described above.

GAO Comments

1. We revised the numbers as suggested to reflect additional data provided by DOD.
2. We disagree with DOD's assertion that several disparate issues are being addressed in the original paragraph as written and have not changed the report text in response to that assertion. The entire paragraph supports the initial clause of our topic sentence—"Congress has repeatedly expressed concerns about the pace of military operations." The sentences that follow the topic sentence all document ways that Congress has expressed its concern through legislation over the years. We note both the recent concerns that have been addressed through personnel tempo provisions and the long-standing concerns that were addressed through restrictions on the numbers of personnel who can be mobilized and the allowable lengths of mobilizations. However, in order to clarify the timing of the actions taken by Congress, we have made minor adjustments to the text. Furthermore, we note that, contrary to DOD's assertion that none of the involuntary recall authorities have been modified, in 2006, the Presidential Reserve Call-up authority found in 10 U.S.C. §12304 was amended¹ with an extension of the number of days members could be called under the authority and the addition of criteria to be used to ensure fair treatment of reserve personnel before mobilizing them under this authority.
3. We revised the numbers as suggested to reflect additional data provided by DOD.
4. We have adjusted the text as suggested to provide additional clarification. Throughout the report we had used the term mobilization as it is commonly used to include personnel activations as well as the assembling of equipment. However, we acknowledge that activation is the more technically appropriate term and have thus changed "mobilization" to "activation" as suggested in this and other comments.
5. We have made the changes to the table as suggested.
6. We have added the suggested text as a footnote prior to the table.
7. We have adjusted the text as suggested to provide additional clarification.

¹Pub. L. No. 109-364, §522 (2006).

-
8. We have adjusted the text as suggested.
 9. We have adjusted the text as suggested.

Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Ms. Sharon Pickup (202) 512-9619 or pickups@gao.gov

Acknowledgements

In addition to the contact named above, Michael Ferren, (Assistant Director), Sara Hackley, Molly Whipple, Rebecca Shea, Lynn Milan, Laurie Hamilton, William Bates, Nicole Harms, Cheryl Weissman, Alissa Czyz, and Ricardo Marquez made major contributions to this report.

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